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Letter dated 21 July 2015 from the Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) has the honour to transmit herewith, in accordance with paragraph 5 (b) of resolution 2188 (2014), the final report on its work.

The report was provided to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia on 1 July 2015 and considered by the Committee on 21 July 2015.

We would appreciate it if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Lansana **Gberie**
Coordinator

(*Signed*) Benjamin **Spatz**
Expert

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Final report of the Panel of Experts on Liberia submitted pursuant to paragraph 5 (b) of Security Council resolution 2188 (2014)

Summary

During the current mandate of the Panel of Experts, Liberia was declared free of Ebola virus disease and the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia resumed. This should give the Government the impetus to begin taking full ownership of its security sector.

Militia activity continues along the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, with deadly attacks perpetrated in Côte d'Ivoire in January, February, March and May 2015. The Panel assesses that the militia groups in the region remain viable, in particular in the forested regions along the border with Côte d'Ivoire. Those networks have retained the capacity and the intent to conduct deadly attacks, notwithstanding the extremely promising geopolitical developments in the region, which are marked by strong positive relationships at the level of the Heads of State of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, since Côte d'Ivoire joined the Mano River Union in 2008.

The Panel's assessment of the main border areas of Liberia with its neighbours found weaknesses along all borders. The relatively high level of cooperation between the customs and security officials of Sierra Leone and Liberia appeared to make that border the least problematic. Nevertheless, smuggling routes in Sierra Leone and Guinea — often used to transport illicit drugs and artisanal guns — remain of concern because those clandestine channels could be used to transport any illicit materiel or finance destabilizing activities. The capacity of the Government to control weapons and to monitor and secure its borders, in particular with Côte d'Ivoire, remains extremely low. That issue has become more important in view of the accelerated drawdown of troops and police of the United Nations Mission in Liberia within the coming months.

No notifications for arms, ammunition or the provision of training were submitted to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia by the Government during the period under review. The Panel has identified four suspected violations of the arms embargo, which illustrate weaknesses in the Liberian security sector and highlight the continuing unrest in western Côte d'Ivoire.

The Armed Forces of Liberia began marking their weapons in line with Security Council resolution 1903 (2009).

The firearms and ammunition control act — the central piece of legislation that would establish the legal framework to regulate, monitor and control arms and ammunition in Liberia — has still not been passed.

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I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2188 (2014), the Security Council renewed the arms embargo on non-State actors in Liberia and the targeted travel ban relating to several Liberian and non-Liberian individuals. It extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Liberia for a period of 10 months. In a letter dated 9 January 2015 addressed to the President of the Council (S/2015/18), the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Lansana Gberie (Canada, finance) and Benjamin Spatz (United States of America, arms) to the Panel, with Mr. Gberie serving as Coordinator.

2. The Security Council mandated the Panel to conduct an assessment mission to Liberia and neighbouring States in order to investigate and compile a final report on the implementation, and any violations, of the measures on arms, including the sources of financing for the illicit trade of arms, as well as on the progress with regard to the Government's ability to effectively control arms and police its border areas. The mandate also included the provision of an update on the Government's progress in meeting the arms notification requirements established by the Council.

II. Methodology

3. The Panel worked in close cooperation with the Government of Liberia and related bodies, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the national police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms and the Legislature, and with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire. The Panel regularly consulted and exchanged information with relevant government agencies.

4. The Panel travelled to Liberia in March and April 2015 and to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea in May and June 2015. On 4 May, it provided an update to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia on progress in the security and legal sectors with regard to the Government's ability to effectively monitor and control arms and border issues. In addition to government officials and UNMIL, the Panel held consultations with officials from the embassies of Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone and the offices of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Monrovia. In Sierra Leone, the Panel held consultations with officials of the Mano River Union and of government security agencies, including the Transnational Organized Crime Unit, the Office of National Security, customs and immigration, border security and the police. In Guinea, the Panel assessed border security procedures and held consultations with the national police and the border guards. The Panel accorded priority to consultations with officials of the Government of Liberia and UNMIL and to field-based investigations of the border regions of Liberia with Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. It extensively reviewed official and unofficial documents relating to Liberia, including those from governmental and United Nations entities, data obtained from embassies and regional organizations and information obtained in interviews conducted in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The Panel sought incontrovertible documentary or physical evidence and corroboration from multiple sources. Its findings were, where possible, brought to the attention of those concerned to afford them an opportunity to further explain or refute evidence presented by the Panel. Annex I provides a list of the meetings and consultations held by the Panel during the reporting period.

III. Context of the report

A. Ebola virus disease and the security sector

5. On 9 May 2015, the World Health Organization declared Liberia free of Ebola virus disease after more than 18 months of a debilitating crisis that had an impact on all aspects of life in the country. The crisis exposed gaps in government capacity in various sectors while overstretching — and showing the limits of — its security forces (see S/2014/831, paras. 12-25). Nevertheless, the disease appears to have had a negligible long-term impact on the security sector. Eight soldiers, six national police officers, including a deputy commander in Nimba County, and a Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization officer were reported to have died of the virus. The Panel assesses that, while those deaths adversely affected the morale of the security forces, they did not have a disabling effect on coherence and operational capacity. The Panel found, however, that the crisis compounded the Government's capacity constraints and negatively affected its ability to fulfil some of its obligations under Security Council resolution 2188 (2014).

B. Liberian transition plan

6. The Panel notes that the foregoing constraints are highlighted in the Government's UNMIL transition plan. Approved by the National Security Council on 6 March 2015, the plan provides details of the Government's proposals to assume the security responsibilities currently performed by UNMIL as the Mission accelerates the process of phasing out its security role. The responsibilities cover all aspects of maintaining security throughout Liberia. Although the executive branch and both houses of the Legislature have committed themselves to implementing the Plan, early indications are that implementation will be significantly delayed without strong bilateral and multilateral support and pressure.

7. The financial shortcomings of the plan appear serious. The first meeting of the joint implementation group, which includes senior government officials, leaders of security agencies, UNMIL and the Ambassador of the United States of America, was held on 3 June 2015, two months behind schedule. UNMIL and government officials informed the Panel that the group had focused on the Government's current budgetary allocation for the plan. The Government had estimated the entire cost of the three-year plan to be $104.8 million, with an additional $11.5 million for the related cost of a joint justice and security programme. Government expenditure on the plan had been estimated at $76.1 million for fiscal year 2015/16, but only $15 million had actually been allocated to the plan in the draft budget for that period.[1]

8. The Panel is concerned that the current budget reduces expenditure for the national police by 8 per cent (from $16.4 million to $15 million) and for the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization by 19 per cent (from $5.7 million to $4.6 million). In addition, the budget for the Ministry of Defence, covering the

[1] The draft budget, amounting to $604 million, is 4.9 per cent less than that for fiscal year 2014/15 ($635.2 million). The appropriation for the security and rule of law sectors amounted to $90.4 million, which is 6.5 per cent higher than the allocation in the previous budget, but that amount includes $15 million for the transition plan.

armed forces, the Executive Protection Service and the National Security Agency, was cut by 15 per cent (from $14.8 million to $12.5 million).

9. Important benchmarks relating to the implementation of the transition plan have already been missed and are unlikely to be met in 2015. They include the enactment of a new police act, a uniform code of military justice, a firearms and ammunition control act and an amendment to the Defence Act. Those laws are critical for the proper functioning of the security sector and bear directly on the Government's ability to fulfil its obligations under Security Council resolution 2188 (2014) (see paras. 20-26 below).

C. Regional challenges and engagement

10. The Government's security apparatus has serious capacity limitations when it comes to effectively controlling or monitoring arms within its territory and policing the borders with neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The Panel travelled to the main border areas with all three States and found many weaknesses. The border with Sierra Leone appeared to be the least problematic currently, in part owing to the high level of cooperation between the customs and security officials of the two countries, especially at the key border crossing area of Bo Waterside/ Gendema. Incidents of drug trafficking, mainly cannabis but sometimes also cocaine and heroin, are, however, common along what is a largely unpoliced border. Of greater concern to the Panel is the border with Guinea, the place of origin of many of the artisanal weapons circulating in Liberia (see paras. 63-65 below) and of hard narcotic drugs, such as cocaine, that are probably passing through Liberia for trans-shipment abroad. The border with Côte d'Ivoire is of the most primary and immediate concern with regard to regional security and stability, given that it is the scene of continuing militant activity (see paras. 38-78 below).

11. In one of the most promising shifts since the years of regional conflict during the 1990s and early 2000s, the Panel notes that strong positive relationships exist among the Heads of State of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. In the current environment, it is nearly inconceivable that any of the four Governments will support anti-Government activities by militants in a neighbouring State, as was the case in the past.

12. All four countries are members of the Mano River Union, which is slowly being revitalized as a result of renewed focus. Its secretariat is now located in a new building in Sierra Leone, with additional staff. In May 2015, the Panel held discussions with senior officials of the secretariat, including those of the Peace and Security Unit established in January. The Unit consists of an ex-brigadier in the Liberian armed forces, a colonel in the Guinean army and a senior Sierra Leonean police officer. The officials informed the Panel that Côte d'Ivoire would second a senior customs officer once Sierra Leone was declared free of Ebola by the World Health Organization and that the Unit would be organizing a meeting of military, technical and operational personnel of all four countries for the purpose of conducting joint border patrols once the region was declared free of Ebola. The secretariat has already provided some support to the personnel of the Liberian Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization.

13. The Panel notes the continuing engagement with the Liberian security sector of the African Union and, in particular, ECOWAS. Both bodies have maintained

offices in Liberia since 2004 to support the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2003. Nigeria and Ghana currently provide two of the largest UNMIL military contingents. ECOWAS has also provided significant support to the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, including in the form of a scanning machine that is currently being used at Roberts International Airport and of funding to build accommodation for personnel in Grand Gedeh, Maryland, Nimba and Sinoe counties. It has also made Liberia the headquarters of an early warning bureau focused on threats to peace and security covering Liberia, Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone, which, although currently more aspirational than functional, has significant potential.

14. The third quadripartite meeting of the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and UNMIL was held on 10 March 2015 in Abidjan. The Governments committed themselves to reviving a bilateral joint commission, established in 1972 but dormant since the 1980s, and made plans for Ivorian refugees to be repatriated to Côte d'Ivoire. Given their historic and continuing role in Liberia, the Panel finds it surprising that neither ECOWAS nor the Mano River Union has apparently been involved in the meetings.

15. The final communiqué of the meeting included a paragraph that is potentially problematic for the future security of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. It states that the Governments agree to a right of hot pursuit of militants who engage in cross-border attacks on either State. It is noted in the communiqué that the agreement is only in principle and that the modalities of its implementation will be agreed upon in a formal accord that will respect both countries' national laws and applicable international law, including refugee law. The Panel notes, however, that the inclusion of the paragraph and the ambiguity of the words "hot pursuit" create legal and practical problems that, if left unresolved, could lead to future abuse by one or both of the parties to the communiqué. Furthermore, given the disparity of power and resources between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, and the fact that UNMIL is currently on a transition course out of Liberia, the Panel assesses that the participation of ECOWAS and the Mano River Union in future meetings would be important because they would serve as impartial arbiters of good practice, especially with regard to working out the modalities for the implementation of the communiqué.

16. The urgency of the regional involvement is underlined by the uncertainty about the exact delineation of the boundary between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, especially along the Cavalla River. The Panel sought clarification from the two Governments on the precise boundary, but received no clear answers. Clarity is important because most of the armed militant groups that operate along the border make frequent use of the islands in the river to regroup and organize attacks (see paras. 45 and 61-62 below). Ambiguity as to the country from whose territory the groups are operating has implications for what may constitute "hot pursuit" and for which country has a primary responsibility for tackling the problem posed by the militants. Furthermore, the alleged shooting incidents along the river (see paras. 70-74 below) could have dramatically different implications based on the precise location of the national boundaries.

IV. Current measures relating to arms pursuant to resolution 2188 (2014)

A. Overview

17. By its resolution 2188 (2014), the Security Council renewed the arms embargo on Liberia, which restricts the supply, sale or transfer of arms and any related materiel and the provision of any assistance, advice or training relating to military activities, including financing and financial assistance, to all non-governmental entities and individuals operating in the territory of Liberia. Consistent with the Panel's previous assessment, government officials remain largely unaware of the nature and requirements of the embargo (see S/2014/363, para. 8, and S/2014/831, paras. 27-29 and 37-38).

B. Notifications

18. According to paragraph 2 (b)(ii) of resolution 2128 (2013), the Government has the primary responsibility to notify the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia in advance of any shipment of lethal arms and related materiel to the Government or of any provision of assistance, advice or training relating to military or other security sector activities. During the period under review, the Panel was not aware of any such notifications or of any deliveries of arms or ammunition or provision of training to the Government.

19. The Government's most recent notification was for a shipment of arms, ammunition and materiel for the armed forces that was formally communicated to the Committee on 13 October 2014 (see S/2014/831, paras. 36-37). The weapons have, however, not yet been delivered. The Panel's attempts to obtain further clarification on the issue from the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning were unsuccessful. The latter failed to respond to the Panel's repeated requests to arrange a meeting with officials.

C. Legislation relating to arms and the security sector

20. The firearms and ammunition control act — the central piece of legislation that would establish the legal framework to regulate, monitor and control arms and ammunition in Liberia — has still not been passed. The Panel received information from the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms on 3 June 2015 that the House of Representatives had in May twice discussed the draft act, but not endorsed it. Later in May, the House had sent the draft act, without endorsement, to the Senate. The Senate can pass the draft act on its own; House endorsement is a courtesy and a common step in legislative consensus on key issues. It would then need to be signed into law by the President. The National Commission informed the Panel that it had briefed the Senate Committee on National Defence, Intelligence, Security and Veteran Affairs on 26 May on the urgent need to pass the legislation. The Panel had previously met the Chair of the Senate Committee on 8 April to gather information on the status of the legislation and to emphasize the importance of its passage. The Chair informed the Panel at the time that the legislation was a

top priority for the Legislature and that it would be passed before the Legislature began considering the annual national budget in June. That has not happened.

21. The Panel received information from the Senate Committee early in June that several senators and members of the House had expressed reservations about the restrictions contained in the legislation on private acquisition of guns that limited individual ownership to a single-barrel rifle. The legislation in fact places further restrictions, limiting ownership of a rifle to those who require it for professional purposes (see S/2014/363, para. 33). The Panel reiterates that watering down the restriction will be detrimental to security in Liberia.

22. The Panel, in its final report of 2014, drew attention to the lack of movement towards the enactment of the code of military discipline, which had been signed by the Minister of Defence in 2013. The Panel urged the Government to expedite its ratification (see S/2014/831, para. 100). This was in the light of a shooting incident involving the armed forces that had left one young person dead and two others seriously injured at the height of the Ebola crisis in August 2014 (see ibid., paras. 18-19). Lacking a standard legal instrument to deal with such misconduct, the armed forces set up a board of arbitrators, comprising United States military advisers to the Liberian armed forces, which conducted an administrative (not criminal) disciplinary hearing that found the officer in command of the operation, a captain, guilty of conduct unbecoming of an officer and of dereliction of duty. He was briefly detained and then demoted.

23. The Panel discussed the draft legislation, now known as the uniform code of military justice, with the Deputy Minister of Defence for Operations on 9 June. It combines elements of United States military legal instruments with those of ECOWAS countries. It makes provision for a staff judge advocate or senior legal officer of the armed forces, coast guard or air wing, who will be the counsel general within the armed forces. There will also be a panel of judges, which will consist of legally trained serving armed forces officers. The armed forces currently have no trained lawyer, but four personnel are undergoing training. The Deputy Minister informed the Panel that some of the trainees would be qualified in 2016, after which the Government would submit the code to the Legislature for enactment.

24. The Panel deems the passage of the uniform code of military justice as urgent. As it observed in its final report for 2014 (ibid., para. 17), the National Defence Strategy defines the role of the army as protecting the territorial integrity of Liberia and assisting the national police in national emergencies. The Deputy Minister of Defence for Operations emphasized to the Panel in June 2015 that, the missteps by some of its personnel during the Ebola emergency notwithstanding, the armed forces remained committed to those roles, which would involve close interaction with the civilian population in tense situations. This is of concern because the Panel has received information about another disquieting incident involving violence against civilians by the armed forces. On 14 April, the national police arrested a soldier for allegedly killing a motorcyclist at the Thinker's Village community in the Paynesville suburb of Monrovia. He was briefly detained by the national police and then handed over to the armed forces. From information that the Panel gathered from Ministry of Defence sources early in June, he will be subjected to the same ad hoc disciplinary arbitration as the captain involved in the West Point shooting of August 2014. The rather mild punishment meted out in such cases is unlikely to deter future misconduct and to enhance good civil-military relations in Liberia. The

draft code, however, imposes severe punishment for the crime of unlawful killing or murder, including "imprisonment for life as a court-martial may direct".

25. The Panel is similarly concerned by the failure to pass the new police act, which, according to the benchmarks in the UNMIL transition plan, had been scheduled for May 2015. The final draft of the act was completed early in 2014. It clearly defines the role of the national police vis-à-vis other security agencies. Its passage is important both for the coherent functioning of the national police and for its relationship with other security agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization.

26. The Panel notes the progress with regard to legislation relating to the Drug Enforcement Agency. Within a few weeks of its submission by the President to the Legislature in June 2014, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act of 2014 was passed. On 17 October, it was signed into law by the President. The Director of the Agency informed the Panel on 7 April 2015 that the Agency had been granted presidential approval to deploy its agents at the Freeport of Monrovia and other seaports. Early in June, the Agency signed a memorandum of understanding with the Freeport's authorities for the deployment, as the Panel had previously recommended (see ibid., para. 109).

D. Arms marking

27. Under Security Council resolution 1903 (2009), the Government is required to mark all weapons and ammunition in its possession, maintain a registry of them and formally notify the Committee about those steps. Such a notification has not yet been submitted. On 10 June 2015, however, after technical assistance and training from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the armed forces began to mark their weapons stockpiles using the Government's two marking machines. The Liberia National Commission on Small Arms transferred the machines, along with a desktop computer, to the armed forces on 26 May (see annex II). The armed forces informed the Panel that they expected to complete the marking process by September. That state of affairs is encouraging, given that the armed forces have the largest weapons stockpile in Liberian armouries and, even though they have the best-maintained armoury, the weapons themselves had the poorest markings (such as only painted numbers on buttstocks of AK-47 rifles). The Panel is, however, concerned by information provided by the National Commission on 3 June to the effect that arrangements had not been made to create a database for the marking because there were no funds to hire a technician to do so.

28. The Panel notes that the armed forces have greater capacity, professionalism and enthusiasm than other security agencies in relation to the marking of weapons. That is inextricably tied to the significant, focused and sustained engagement that the armed forces have had with the United States, unlike the other security agencies. The particularly effective use of embedded advisers and mentors has, over time, had deeply positive effects on the culture and capacity of the armed forces.

29. The Panel assesses that the relevant armourers have the technical know-how to mark the weapons in line with ECOWAS and international standards and that the Government's marking machines are fully functional and have all the necessary components. There is no reason why the government stockpiles cannot be marked in the near term. Until there are sufficient markings on weapons and ammunition,

Liberia remains non-compliant with the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials (see also S/2013/316, paras. 8-11; S/2013/683, paras. 6 and 22-25; S/2014/363, para. 17; and S/2014/831, para. 45).

E. Government armouries and stockpile management systems

30. The Panel gained access to the government armouries and reviewed the UNMIL inspection reports completed in 2015. The Panel continues to assess the overall standard currently maintained by Liberian armourers as adequate but far from perfect (see S/2014/363, paras. 14-23, and S/2014/831, paras. 43-51). The Panel has three main concerns about the government armouries and stockpile management systems, in addition to the nascent weapons marking, which are discussed below.

Insufficient weapons storage facilities in counties

31. Outside Monrovia, weapons storage facilities are insufficient. The problem affects all government ministries and agencies, but especially the security forces, and primarily the national police, given the importance of securing arms and ammunition and the deleterious impact that poor facilities have on officer morale. In the leeward counties, Emergency Response Unit and Police Support Unit weapons routinely remain with officers at all times, contrary to normal procedures that mandate that they be returned to the armoury after the officers' shifts have ended (see S/2014/831, para. 51). Often, the officers keep their weapons with them in their rooms at the Emergency Response Unit barracks, which are often dilapidated. This will become more of an issue as more trained and vetted police officers are given weapons in the counties and in the future as the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization is being armed.

32. Another reason to enhance the weapons storage facilities is that arms and ammunition seized by the security services outside Monrovia — which constitute the vast majority of the arms and ammunition seized — are often kept in the inadequate facilities of the Emergency Response Unit barracks until they are turned over to UNMIL, brought to Monrovia or turned over to the courts. Arms and ammunition are at times kept in those inadequate storage facilities for significant periods. For example, ammunition found in Grand Gedeh County in February, March and April 2014 — a total of 729 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition — is still being improperly stored in the Emergency Response Unit barracks in Zwedru (see ibid., paras. 79-80 and annex XII). The Panel notes that UNMIL was unaware of that amount of ammunition being improperly stored in Zwedru. This probably does not indicate intent to conceal the arms and ammunition, but rather a lack of prioritization in turning the materiel over to UNMIL — probably the result of less than ideal relationships between the security services and their United Nations police counterparts.

33. An additional spot check by the Panel of leeward storage facilities in May 2015 in Zwedru found that an artisanal pistol, seized from a suspected armed robber, had been turned over by the national police to the magistrate's court. The weapon was allegedly being kept in the court's evidence room. Over several days of repeated requests by the Panel to see the weapon, the court stated that it was unable

to locate the individual who had the key to the room. Weapons should be stored in secure facilities under the watch of the security services.

Systemic challenges during crises

34. Lapses in proper weapons management during the Ebola crisis suggest that in times of crisis, or perceived crisis, "security", whether State security or personal security, may override systematic weapons management, rules and regulations. In those instances, weapons could go missing or be misallocated to those without proper training and vetting. Such was the case in October 2014, when two G3 rifles were removed from the Police Support Unit armouries and kept in the possession of senior national police officers who had not been trained and vetted; some Unit officers who had not been trained and vetted were also allocated weapons for operations. In those instances, the presence of embedded United States trainers and UNMIL police component officers helped to identify the breaches of protocol. The weapons were returned to the armouries in both instances.

Weak institutional systems

35. The Panel largely attributes the adequate standards maintained by the armourers to external support and monitoring, such as embedded advisers and inspection teams, rather than to ingrained systems that will endure and function independently. Accordingly, until such systems mature, it is unlikely that the current standard of the government armouries will be maintained without continued engagement.

36. Many of the shortcomings relating to armouries have been highlighted by UNMIL firearms inspection teams for years. They include arms and ammunition being stored in the same facility; ammunition being stored in open and relatively insecure containers; inadequate lighting; inadequate air conditioning; poor electrical wiring and persistent power outages; lack of fire extinguishers, sandbags or water buckets in case of fire; failure to consistently post security guards outside armouries; and inconsistent usage of weapons logbooks. Those persistent issues are unlikely to be addressed without external oversight and assistance.

37. The Panel further notes that, on 7 March 2015, national police officers noticed that 13 boxes of 12-gauge ammunition were missing from the forensic evidence room. The ammunition had been confiscated on 1 November 2014 from an individual travelling from Guinea to Liberia through Ganta, Nimba County. Five national police officers have been suspended over the breach of security, but no ammunition has been recovered. The room contains many single-barrel shotguns and pistols, which ought to be used as evidence in ongoing cases, stored in a more secure facility or, if no longer needed as evidence, turned over to UNMIL for destruction.

V. Border security concerns and the arms embargo

38. Porous national borders continue to challenge the Liberian national security institutions, even though enhanced border security is critical to maintaining regional security, especially in the light of ongoing regional militant activity. The Panel continued its investigation into border issues relating to Sierra Leone and Guinea, which are of primary concern because of smuggling routes that could be used for trafficking of any kind. The border with Côte d'Ivoire remains of particular concern

to the Panel, however, owing to the unresolved political and social issues in that country that have triggered deadly attacks by mercenary and militia groups in the past.

39. During the Panel's current mandate, that border was marked by continued instability, including a series of attacks and kidnappings carried out on the Ivorian side. Some of the militants have specific links to Liberia, while others have more tenuous links. All the evidence points to a situation characterized by individuals who move freely across the border, often are de facto dual nationals and have the intent and capacity to conduct deadly attacks. The attacks do not constitute a direct threat to the national security of either country, but raise tensions and, left unchecked, could potentially escalate into broader, more serious conflict.

A. Attacks in Côte d'Ivoire in 2015 and cross-border militant links

40. On 9/10 January 2015, a group of armed men attacked the Ivorian village of Dayoke, near the sites of previous attacks on Fete and Grabo. They killed two Ivorian soldiers and then attacked the gendarmerie in Grabo, which repelled them. At least one attacker was killed. The Panel confirmed that he was Kapet Severain Saboa, a registered refugee since 6 July 2012, ostensibly residing in the Little Wlebo refugee camp (see annex III). He had previously been identified by the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire as Kouzo Kapet (see S/2015/252, paras. 34-37). The Panel notes that "Kouzo'o" was the name associated with the leader of one of the combatant groups, identified in the 2014 report, according to documents and testimony obtained by the Panel in 2014 (see S/2014/363, paras. 46-48 and 54 and annexes V, VI and VIII). According to the Group of Experts, he participated in the attacks of 22 and 23 February 2014 on Grabo and in the attack on Para and Sao on 8 June 2012 that killed 26 Ivorians and seven United Nations peacekeepers (see S/2012/766, para. 45; S/2013/228, paras. 35-38; and S/2015/252, para. 37). His participation in several attacks in Côte d'Ivoire further underscores the fact that militants have frequently been registered as refugees in Liberia and that refugee camps can serve to recruit and shelter combatants (see S/2015/252, para. 37).

41. On 28 February 2015 in the Ivorian town of Tipoto, near Dayoke, a group of armed assailants attacked villagers said to be from Burkina Faso, killing two and causing a number to flee to Liberia. Tipoto was attacked again on 1 March by a group of assailants who killed at least two people. Subsequent arrests by the Ivorian armed forces — which are generally seen by the local communities as unfairly targeting innocents — led to Ivorian civilians fleeing to Liberia, according to the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission and Ivorians who have fled. The Ivorian armed forces accuse the villagers of being attackers or of sympathizing with those who attacked the surrounding areas in 2014 and 2015.

42. On 3 May 2015, UNOCI reported that the Ivorian village of Soklodogba had been attacked by a small group of assailants reported to be armed with AK-47 and single-barrel rifles. A villager was killed. According to the reports, which were not verified by the Panel, body parts were removed from the deceased in a pattern suggesting ritual mutilation.

43. The militant attacks occur in an environment rife with ongoing land disputes. On 17 February 2015, some 16 people were injured near Guiglo during violent clashes that appeared to have been part of a land dispute, according to United

Nations reports. According to information received by the Panel from Ivorian witnesses, the village of Soklodogba was attacked by a small group of assailants on 22 and 23 February. Houses, shops and warehouses belonging to people believed to be from Burkina Faso were burned down and a mosque was set ablaze.

44. Issues relating to land ownership, land tenure and conflicting understanding of traditional ownership rights in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia have long been identified in United Nations reports, the report of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2009 and the 2008 peacebuilding priority plan of the Government of Liberia as among the more potentially explosive challenges to governance, peace and stability in the two countries.

B. Kidnappings

45. There have been two alleged instances of militants kidnapping individuals from border villages in Côte d'Ivoire. On 29 January 2015, a combatant group that may have included both Liberian and Ivorian individuals kidnapped nine villagers from Irato. On 15 April, the town chief of Wessato in Côte d'Ivoire and two others were kidnapped, allegedly by a group of Ivorians and Liberians, and taken to an island in the middle of the Cavalla River. The Panel interviewed one of those individuals and was informed by UNMIL and the Government of Liberia about the others. The individuals stated that they had been kidnapped because the militants believed that they were cooperating with the Ivorian authorities. All the individuals escaped in unclear circumstances. The kidnappings are adding to an atmosphere of increasing fear and anger among communities in the region that combines with regional militant activity, an increased security presence by the Ivorian armed forces and arrests in Côte d'Ivoire and shooting incidents along the river (see paras. 70-74 below).

C. Arrests in Côte d'Ivoire shedding light on militant links

46. On 2 January 2015, the Ivorian authorities arrested six individuals near Tabou after they had allegedly travelled by boat from Ghana with the intention of launching attacks in the region. They were carrying 16 improvised explosive devices and, according to the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, various documents, including a list of military equipment to arm 1,200 combatants. The documents appear to be related to those that suggest links to the attack of February 2014 on Grabo and to Moïse Koré, who was involved in arms trafficking for the former President of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo (see S/2015/252, paras. 38-40 and annexes 3, 4 and 7). According to the Group of Experts, the leader of the group, Théophile Zahourou, "Commando Binguiste", stated — and stamps in his passport indicate — that he had travelled to Guinea-Bissau, Togo, Burkina Faso, Guinea, France and Senegal, among others, to recruit, build support and raise funds to destabilize Côte d'Ivoire. In Ghana, his focus was recruiting Ivorians and Liberians from the Ampain and Buduburam refugee camps (see ibid., para. 41). This shows the regional links of the militant groups and their easy reach across porous regional borders.

47. In the Ampain refugee camp, Zahourou met a combatant known as "Silencieux", who in turn introduced him to more combatants (see ibid., para. 42).

This is consistent with the testimony of militia sources with whom the Panel spoke in 2014 and 2015. It is also in line with the tactics of militants in the region, where one commander would have direct knowledge of and command and control over a small group of men. The Panel notes that planning and recruiting notebooks obtained in 2014 from militants in Liberia and statements from militia sources in Liberia refer to an individual named "Silencieux" (see S/2014/363, annexes IV-VI). Furthermore, Zahourou admitted having close links to Colonel H., a leading commander of the attacks of 2014 on Fete and Grabo and who also had some command responsibility over fighters resident in Liberia, both Ivorian militiamen and Liberian mercenaries (see S/2015/252, para. 41).

48. Notwithstanding the previous findings of the Panel, the Group of Experts and the Liberian authorities that link individuals to cross-border militant activity, there has been little follow-up on the Liberian side of the border. For example, there has been little substantive investigation of known or suspected militants who are allegedly located in Liberia, including Isaac Chegbo ("Bob Marley"), Eric Smith, Antah Howah, Augustine Tweah, Hansen Weah, Augustin Dabo Takouo (see annex IV for a confirmed photograph), Augustine Gnagbe, Capello, Tahi Olivier, Seyon Brooks, Julien Monpuho Gougnan ("Columbo"), Barracuda and Soloman Jolopo. Many of those individuals have been arrested at various times by Liberian security agents, but were often inexplicably released or escaped.

49. In part, the recent inaction by the Government with regard to those individuals, and related issues, has to do with the effect that the Ebola outbreak had on drawing the focus of Liberia away from all other issues for more than 18 months. It also appears to result from a general failure by Liberian security officials to accord priority to addressing issues of transnational militants and mercenaries. The Panel recognizes that the Liberian security agencies have far more responsibilities than they can deal with while being faced with daunting financial, human and logistical constraints. The usual, and logical, result is that they respond to crises rather than undertake preventative security operations.

D. Financing of attacks, structure and leadership

50. Evidence suggests that the structures of command and control as well as the political and financial leadership remain largely as previously reported by the Panel. The leadership has been a mixture of elites tied to the former Gbagbo regime and sympathizers in the region; militant networks comprise Ivorian militias resident in Côte d'Ivoire, Ivorian militias resident in Liberia and Liberian mercenaries who move between the two countries (see S/2014/831, paras. 32-35, 59-60 and 63-71).

51. This reflects the reality that the ongoing instability in western Côte d'Ivoire exists on two levels. At the higher level, there is political manoeuvring among pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara elite factions, who have access to resources. Here, the stakes are political and financial spoils and positions in the Government. The second level is local and concerns small-scale, localized grievances, often over land or perceived past abuses, into which the elite can very easily tap to catalyse recruitment among low-level fighters and mobilize attacks. The militant leadership has the ability to mobilize multiple sources of combatant labour without needing to deploy significant resources, finances or armaments (see ibid., para. 87).

52. Financing sources are relatively minimal and appear to have largely dried up relative to the larger infusions of capital in 2011 and 2012 (see para. 60 below and S/2014/831, para. 86). The financial channels remain viable, however, given that much of the funding is alleged to come using Moneygram, Western Union, Mobile Money and hand-to-hand transfers (the last-mentioned being particularly easy given the porosity of regional borders). This is supported by the findings of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire (see S/2015/252, paras. 28-48 and 265-279).

53. The Panel suspects that the increased security measures taken by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, in particular the arrest of some higher-level individuals, have had a positive near-term impact in decreasing militant activity. In addition, the increased security presence of the Ivorian armed forces in the border region and the detention and arrest of lower-level individuals have also probably limited attacks in the region. It is unclear, however, whether those measures, which are perceived by local communities as heavy-handed and unfair, will ultimately prove durable or will create lasting resentment among the larger population while failing to tackle the true drivers of instability in the region.

54. The Panel sought the telephone records of known and active mercenaries and militiamen to help to determine the structure and membership of their networks and to establish the connections between those groups and deadly attacks. On 21 May 2015, the Panel requested the Ministry of Justice of Liberia to assist in obtaining records from Liberian telephone companies. The Government has not yet responded to the request. The Panel recalls that on 4 April 2013 it sent a similar request to the Government and followed up multiple times, to no avail.

E. Suspected arms embargo violations

55. The Panel has identified four suspected violations of the arms embargo, outlined below, that relate to specific instances and groups of combatants. Those networks have retained operational capacity and demonstrated intent to conduct deadly attacks. Overall, the Panel concludes that the overlapping militant groups, or individuals who could easily coalesce to form a militant group based on existing networks, remain active. Influxes of money or arms could easily mobilize the groups.

56. First, credible mercenary and militia sources informed the Panel that in conjunction with the attack of 9/10 January 2015 on Dayoke (see para. 40 above), which had clear links to Liberia, a small number of arms had been moved across the Cavalla River from Kaibo Wortiken (variously written as Karboworte) in Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire in violation of the arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire. This is similar to the information received and reported in 2014 about arms moving back and forth before and after the attacks on Fete and Grabo, which were controlled by Augustin Kapeyou Gnagbe (see S/2014/831, paras. 74-75 and annexes IV-V). Kapet Severain Saboa, the individual killed in the attack of 9/10 January, was an associate of Gnagbe linked to past joint militant activity. Gnagbe is reported to have left the Little Wlebo refugee camp and to be living in a village near Kaibo Wortiken along with other known militants, such as Tahi Olivier and Capello, whom the Panel suspects may have participated in the attacks of 2015. It is likely that the group used the same cache of arms as in previous attacks.

57. Second, the Panel continued to investigate the hidden weapons caches in Liberia to determine the whereabouts and identity of the militants who control the weapons used in the following attacks previously investigated by the Panel: the attacks of 23 February and 15 May 2014 on Fete and Grabo, the attack on the Ivorian barracks at Péhékanhouébli and the weapons stolen from those barracks; the attack of 13 March 2013 on Zilebli; the attack of 23 March 2013 on Petit Guiglo; the attempted attack of 20 March 2013 on Tiobly; the attack of 24 April 2012 on Sakré; the attack of 8 June 2012 on Sao and Para that killed seven peacekeepers from the Niger; and the attack of 15 and 16 September 2011 on Zriglo and Nigre.

58. In March and May 2015, the Panel obtained evidence that at least some of those weapons are controlled by Seyon Brooks (also known as "Gussie Brooks"). Nyezee Barway, Edward Cole and Bobby Sarpee told the Panel in 2012 that Brooks, a former general of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia, was one of the three battlefield commanders that had attacked Sakré, Sao and Para in 2012 (see S/2012/901, para. 45).

59. The Panel interviewed Brooks in Zwedru in May 2015. He admitted being part of the attacks on Sakré, Sao and Para, including that in which the seven peacekeepers were killed. He informed the Panel that he had more than 30 AK-47 rifles and an unspecified number of rocket-propelled grenades. Those weapons may be the same as those described to the Panel by a former mercenary general as being located around the Tien's Town area of Grand Gedeh County (see S/2014/831, paras. 77-78). He stated that the group that he controlled comprised more than 100 men, could be mobilized to attack at any time, was committed to attacking Côte d'Ivoire and even had aspirations to attack Liberia as well if the opportunity arose. The Panel could not confirm those assertions, but believes that, given Brooks' background, his claims must be taken seriously.

60. Brooks lamented the lack of financial and logistical support for attacks, stating that that was the limiting factor for his group. If true, it adds credence to the claim that funding for such mercenary groups has dried up. Annex V contains further information on Brooks.

61. Third, the national police, villagers and militia sources have informed the Panel that a small and perhaps new armed group has emerged in River Gee County, based on the islands that dot the Cavalla River. The group is called the Liberian-Ivorian Military Association. Its militants allegedly kidnapped the Ivorian villagers, described above, and are alleged to have taken part in attacks in the past, although it is unclear whether they did so in their current guise or as part of another group.

62. Sources of the Panel indicated that the leadership of the Liberian-Ivorian Military Association included the following individuals, whose names the Panel has heard from other sources to be militants: Yeagba Doubouyu Samedi ("Kaffe Noir"), "Chapeau", "Lakota", Jerry Freeman ("Playboy"), Kelvin Tiger and Benedictus Nyenpan. The Panel notes that the acronym used for the Association, LIMA, has long been the call sign for Liberian mercenaries, referring to the military phonetic alphabet "L". Various groups called LIMA have existed on and off for years (see S/2011/367, paras. 24-25, and S/2011/757, para. 43 and annex 5). Investigations into the group are continuing.

63. Fourth, there is cross-border trade in 12-gauge artisanal shotguns and pistols into Liberia from neighbouring countries, especially Guinea, which serves as a

significant producer of artisanal weapons in the region (see S/2011/367, para. 40; S/2011/757, para. 92; S/2012/448, para. 43; and S/2013/683, para. 8). In addition to those artisanal weapons, the Panel notes that non-artisanal industrially manufactured handguns are available in the local market in Monrovia (see annex VI).

64. The technology to produce the weapons has migrated from Guinea to Liberia, primarily through the migration of individuals of Guinean origin who have the technical metalworking skills to make them. Typically, the weapons are made from old pieces of scrap metal in a process that takes only a few days and requires minimal inputs. The Panel observed the process at a forge in Zwedru owned by a Guinean. He denied that he manufactured pistols, but the technology is the same. The Panel suspects that forges in Liberia manufacture artisanal pistols, which sell for between $25 and $40 in rural areas of Liberia and some $75 in Monrovia (see annex VII for examples).

65. The robust trade in shotguns is largely driven by rural communities, which use them for hunting, but they are also used for personal security, in armed robberies, in mob violence and, occasionally, in cross-border raids. Single-barrel rifles are increasingly present during riots and demonstrations against government officials and the police. Pistols have no viable hunting function. An increase in the availability of such weapons, especially pistols, would have a negative impact on internal security, although they do not represent a serious threat to national security per se. The Panel remains concerned, however, that the ease with which the weapons enter Liberia exemplifies the incapacity of the Government to secure its borders to prevent arms trafficking. The Panel notes that without the passage of firearms legislation the weapons will remain unregulated.

F. Attempted purchase of pistols from Emergency Response Unit officers

66. On 4 April 2015, Emergency Response Unit officers in Pleebo, Maryland County, arrested a market trader when she sought to purchase two pistols from them for $180. The Panel obtained the woman's written statements taken by the national police and interviewed her on multiple occasions. The woman, whose livelihood is buying and selling clothing and small goods between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, admitted seeking to purchase the pistols, but claimed that she had been instructed to do so by an Ivorian soldier, Toure Ybrahema, based at the Prollo-Harper border crossing. The national police informed the Panel that the individual was indeed an Ivorian soldier stationed at that crossing. She also stated that the soldier had confiscated her goods in Côte d'Ivoire as she was attempting to cross into Liberia and would return them only if she purchased the pistols for him. She said that he had told her that she could obtain weapons from the police in Pleebo and provided her with $180 for that purpose (see annex VIII for further details on the case). After her arrest, he attempted to find her, allegedly to recover the weapons. According to the national police, he twice crossed the border at Prollo-Harper and once travelled to Pleebo, approximately an hour away by car, looking for her.

67. The case highlights the gaps in Liberian legislation around arms, arms trafficking and militant activity. The woman has been charged with mercenarism and is in pretrial detention in the Harper city jail. Whether she was coerced into buying the weapons or did so freely, she is not assessed to be a fighter by either the

government authorities or the Panel; she was not arrested while being involved in de facto mercenary activity and there is no evidence of past mercenary activity or ties to militants. Nevertheless, a charge of mercenarism is the closest approximation within the current legal framework.

68. That the soldier gave the woman a significant sum to purchase pistols in Liberia suggests that he believes that it is possible to successfully obtain pistols there. It further suggests at least one of the following: he has previously purchased pistols there or had other individuals do so for him; he knows someone who has purchased pistols there before; or he was told that it could be done or otherwise came to believe that it could be done. Had the woman purchased the weapons and successfully transported them to Côte d'Ivoire, it would have constituted a violation of the embargo on that country.

69. An open question remains about why the soldier would wish to obtain two pistols. The Ivorian armed forces are issued with weapons, including pistols. Carrying multiple pistols at once is impractical, making it unlikely that the weapons were being purchased for his use.

G. Alleged shooting incidents by Ivorian soldiers of Liberians on Liberian soil

70. On 30 March 2015, Alphonso Q. Davies was shot and killed along the Cavalla River near Nyangbedior, River Gee County. Villagers from the area stated that they had run to the scene after hearing gunshots and seen armed Ivorian soldiers on the opposite side of the river; Davies was floating in the water next to his canoe. The villagers alleged that as they sought to retrieve the body from the water the soldiers shot at them too, but did not hit anyone. The Government of Liberia conducted an investigation into the shooting that the Panel reviewed. The bullet that killed Davies apparently entered his right ear and exited his left eye. Villagers from Nyangbedior and nearby Kaibo Wortiken, including the clan chief, the town chief, the youth leader, elders and representatives of Ivorians living in the community, told the Panel that Davies had been their high priest, a very important community leadership role that combined traditional and religious authority.

71. The Panel sought clarification from the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire on the issue. It wrote to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, but had received no response at the time of writing of the present report. It also sought an explanation from the Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire to Liberia, who did not deny that the Ivorian soldiers had shot Davies, but said that he had heard — but could not state definitively — that Davies had been on the Ivorian side of the border and been shot while fleeing across the river after seeking to carry out attacks in Côte d'Ivoire.

72. This is not the first instance of allegations that Ivorian soldiers have fired live rounds into Liberia and hit Liberian citizens. Only days before that deadly incident, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization informed the Panel that a resident of Kaibo Wortiken had alleged that he had been shot at by Ivorian soldiers on the Cavalla River on 13/14 March 2015. It also stated that a resident of Nyangbedior had been shot at by Ivorian soldiers on 16 March. Neither shooting resulted in injuries. The Panel heard rumours of several other such incidents in 2014 and 2015. In one particularly worrisome incident, national police and National Security Agency officials informed the Panel that Ivorian soldiers had fired mortar rounds

into the Liberian forest near Nyangbedior on 19 May 2014. Village chiefs and elders informed the Panel that a Liberian man had been injured. The Panel could not independently verify the incident.

73. The Panel notes that the alleged incidents occurred near Ivorian villages that had been attacked just before the alleged shootings by the Ivorian soldiers and are areas of concern for the Panel based on multiple credible sources telling the Panel of the presence of militants. Militia sources and officials from the national police and the National Security Agency informed the Panel that the area was a primary crossing point into Côte d'Ivoire for militants active in River Gee County.

74. The incidents, irrespective of the motivation or details, are inflaming already serious local tensions. Many villagers told the Panel that they were upset that the Government was not protecting them from external aggression. The Panel notes that no Liberian security officers are posted in the remote villages. Moreover, the Government has not yet sent a formal communication to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to seek clarification or to protest and has taken no other formal action. Inaction runs the risk of further alienating the border communities. The tension between Monrovia and the outlying areas is one of the country's main fault lines and was a driving force in the Liberian conflict. The failure to tackle the issue risks exacerbating the serious tension. UNMIL police reports indicate that the national police are not taking the incidents seriously and are failing to grasp the gravity of the situation.

H. Payment of mercenaries to discourage attacks

75. In 2013, the Panel reported that a group of former mercenary Liberian generals, led by a former National Security Agency official from the Samuel Doe era acting in his personal capacity, had been paying Liberian mercenaries with money from the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to discourage attacks on Côte d'Ivoire (see S/2013/683, paras. 32-39). The Panel found no evidence that that was continuing in 2014, but has since determined that the payments never stopped and had in fact been continuing using the same structure as in 2013. The payments are expanding geographically, possibly to include Ivorian militias and Liberian mercenaries.

76. The Panel notes the following key facts about the operation from its previous reporting: the effort was initiated by a former National Security Agency official who offered his freelance services to stabilize the region; the operation focused on Grand Gedeh County; the payments were provided by the Bureau of Operational Intelligence of the Ivorian Ministry of the Interior; officials of the Ministry did not share information regarding the payments with the Government of Liberia for fear that Liberian security agencies would misappropriate the funding and jeopardize the operation; the Government of Liberia stated that it was unaware of the operation; and mercenary sources told the Panel that the payments significantly reduced the capacity of pro-Gbagbo mercenary and militia networks in Liberia to successfully recruit and mobilize combatants (see ibid.).

77. The activity can, perhaps, have a short-term calming effect. The Panel notes that since the payments began there have been no attacks with verified links to Grand Gedeh County, where the payments were made. Nevertheless, the Panel remains highly concerned about the medium-to-long-term implications of the

payments for six interrelated reasons. First, there appears still to be no sharing or coordination of information between the Ivorian and Liberian security services on the issue. Such operations, conducted outside collaborative channels, can undermine trust and cooperation, breed suspicion, have unintended consequences or backfire. Second, the activity is escalatory in that the combatants who are being paid not to attack have an incentive to increase their price. Third, it creates incentives for individuals, in particular combatants, to act as spoilers so that they can benefit from such payments. Fourth, it is unsustainable. The payments cannot last indefinitely. Without solving the root causes of instability or addressing the livelihood concerns of the combatants, the calm is likely to be only temporary. Fifth, the payments could actually be used as a reinvestment in the mercenaries' stock in trade — to purchase arms and ammunition that could be used for future attacks. Sixth, it develops a paymaster system akin to a proto-militia, which could, in theory, be used for anything in the future, including attacks. Together, those reasons reinforce the first point, which is that such a potentially problematic payment scheme, if it is deemed worthy and appropriate, should be planned and executed with close cooperation between Governments. Annex IX contains further information on the mercenary payments, how they came to light in 2015 and inconsistent and troubling aspects of what the Panel learned during its investigation into the payments in 2015.

I. Recruiting efforts for a Liberian mercenary "standby force"

78. Individuals claiming to be linked to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire have been seeking to recruit Liberian mercenaries for a backup emergency fighting force in case of problems surrounding the upcoming elections in Côte d'Ivoire. On 23 May 2015, the Panel obtained incontrovertible evidence that Tiah Moduan Alexan ("Terminator") and Todia Bliase ("Blessing") had attempted to recruit a notorious mercenary fighter, Jefferson Gbarjolo ("Iron Jacket"), in Zwedru (see annex X). Terminator is a registered refugee in the Prime Timber Production refugee camp. Liberian mercenary sources of the Panel state that Blessing lives in Côte d'Ivoire and travels to Liberia only when instructed to do so by Ivorian security officials, according to Blessing's statements to the mercenary generals. Two other mercenary generals have informed the Panel that those individuals have sought to recruit them and others in and around Zwedru and the Prime Timber Production camp. That this is happening simultaneously with mercenary payments to discourage attacks appears to suggest that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has a hedging strategy ahead of the elections in 2015.

VI. Recommendations

79. The Panel recommends that, with support from UNMIL and its international partners, the Government of Liberia:

(a) Appropriately mark all weapons maintained in government armouries and record ammunition stocks in accordance with ECOWAS standards;

(b) Accord priority to the passage of the firearms and ammunition control act, the police act and the uniform code of military justice. Until the passage of the firearms and ammunition control act, the Government should issue an executive

order to ban the importation and possession of arms and ammunition by non-governmental entities and individuals;

(c) Accord priority to building the capacity of the security services, in particular the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the national police, especially in relation to the continuing situation along the border with Côte d'Ivoire. This should include, as a matter of urgency, building the investigative capacity of the national police;

(d) Make the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms and the Drug Enforcement Agency fully operational by providing them with adequate financial, logistical and political support.

80. The Panel recommends that further support be provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa to Liberia to ensure that government armourers maintain their knowledge and are technically equipped to manage the weapons database.

81. The Panel recommends that the Security Council mandate relevant United Nations or other entities to continue to regularly inspect government armouries and weapons management systems even after the UNMIL drawdown and the end of the sanctions regime until the Liberian monitoring systems have sufficiently matured.

82. The Panel recommends that United Nations entities and international partners of Liberia accord priority to embedding advisers and mentors in all relevant security agencies, in particular the armed forces, the national police and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, but also the Executive Protection Service, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the National Security Agency, as a means of strengthening government capacity.

83. The Panel recommends that the Government, with support from its partners, build adequate storage facilities for weapons and ammunition in the counties.

84. The Panel recommends enhanced diplomatic and technical coordination and information-sharing relating to the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, possibly through regular quadripartite meetings bringing together the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, UNMIL and UNOCI and, critically, the Mano River Union and ECOWAS.

Annex I

List of entities with which the Panel had meetings and consultations

Liberia

African Union
Armed Forces of Liberia
Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
Drug Enforcement Agency
Economic Community of West African States
Emergency Response Unit
Executive Protection Service
Liberia National Commission on Small Arms
Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
Liberian National Police
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Justice
Ministry of State/Office of the President
National Security Agency
Police Support Unit
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Mission in Liberia
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
United Nations police
Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire
Embassy of Sierra Leone
Embassy of the United States of America

Sierra Leone

Mano River Union secretariat
Government Gold and Diamond Office
Office of National Security
Sierra Leone police
Sierra Leone customs and immigration
Transnational Organized Crime Unit
Embassy of Guinea

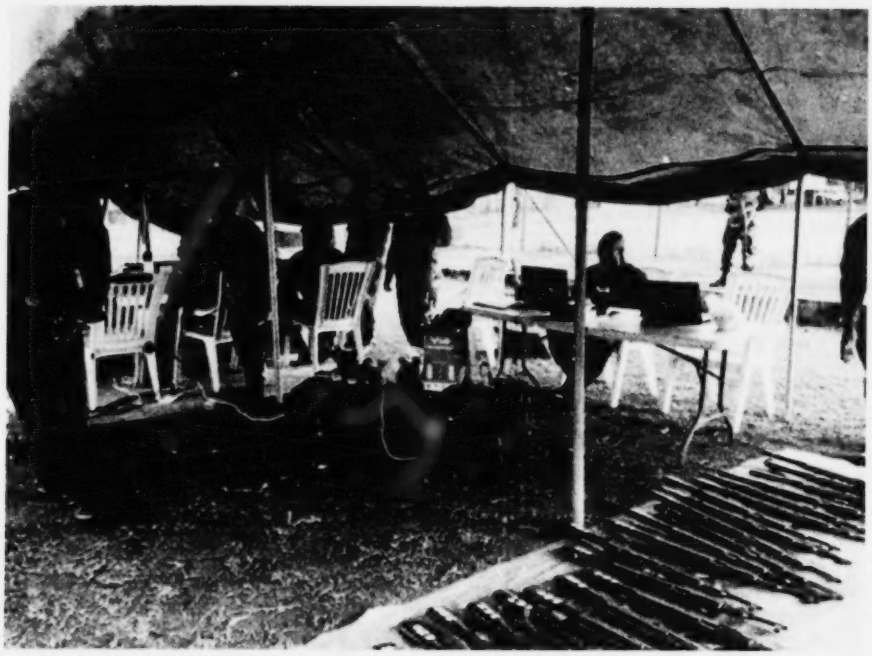
United Nations, New York

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Office for Disarmament Affairs

Annex II

Arms marking undertaken by the Armed Forces of Liberia

Example of a weapon from the armed forces armoury marked by the armed forces
Source: Armed forces.



Armed forces marking weapons
Source: Armed forces.

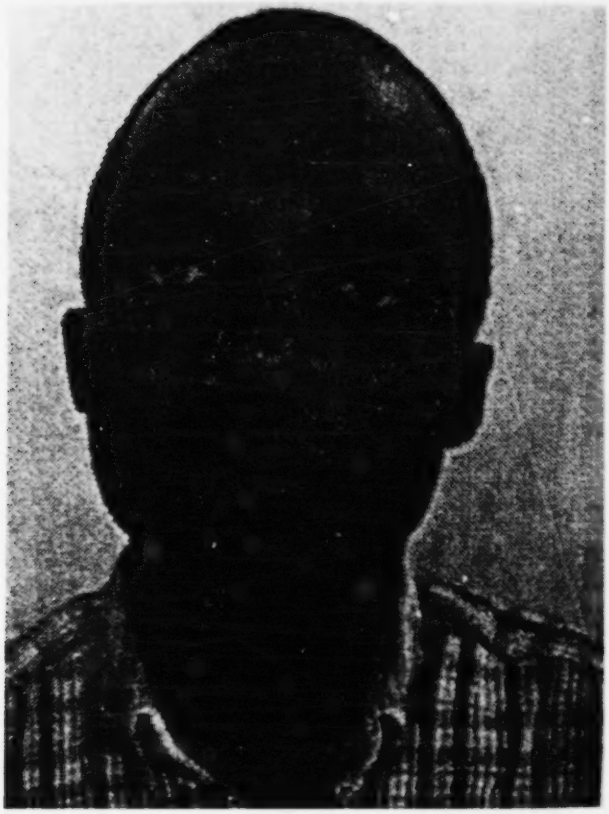
Armed forces marking weapons
Source: Armed forces.

Annex III

Photograph of Kapet Severain Saboa

Annex IV

Photograph of Augustin Dabo Takouo



Annex V

Further information on Seyon Brooks (also known as "Gussie Brooks")

1. To gain further insight into suspected violations of the arms embargo and the individuals and networks involved, the Panel interviewed Seyon Brooks ("Gussie Brooks") in May 2015. He stated that, once Nyezee Barway, Edward Cole, Bobby Sarpee and Rambo had been arrested, Oulai Tako ("Tarzan du Grand Ouest") took control of the group, which was involved in cross-border attacks, including those of 2012 on Sakré, Sao and Para in which the seven peacekeepers from the Niger had been killed (see S/901/2012, paras. 24-32 34, 36 and 40-50). Brooks became Tako's deputy. Brooks said that, with Tako's death in the attack on Petit Guiglo (see S/2013/316, paras. 13-23), he assumed leadership of the group and also control over the arsenal. He allegedly resides in the forested area close to Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County, probably near the village of Senewen.

2. Brooks was arrested previously and his release, subsequent activities and relatively open lifestyle in Zwedru and the surrounding villages indicate the lack of priority that the Liberian authorities have accorded to finding the individuals. The Panel recalls that on 23 June 2012 Brooks and an accomplice were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the attack of 24 April 2012 on Sakré. Although found to be in possession of six rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition, they were released days later. The national police have been unable to provide the Panel with any statements from the detainees or explain why they were released (see S/2012/901, para. 28). In September 2012, the Panel received information indicating that the two individuals had recruited and begun to mobilize some 150 Ivorian and Liberian combatants near Garleo, Konobo district, Grand Gedeh County (see ibid., paras. 28 and 78) and heard similar rumours in 2014.

3. A troubling aspect is that the Panel received information that former generals of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia, one of whom works for the Liberia Refugee Resettlement and Repatriation Commission and fought alongside Brooks and Barway, have been providing Brooks and his group with material support. In May 2015, the Panel observed that that Commission employee brought rice to Brooks. The Commission employee told the Panel that he often stole rice from that distributed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and brought it to Brooks and his group of militants.

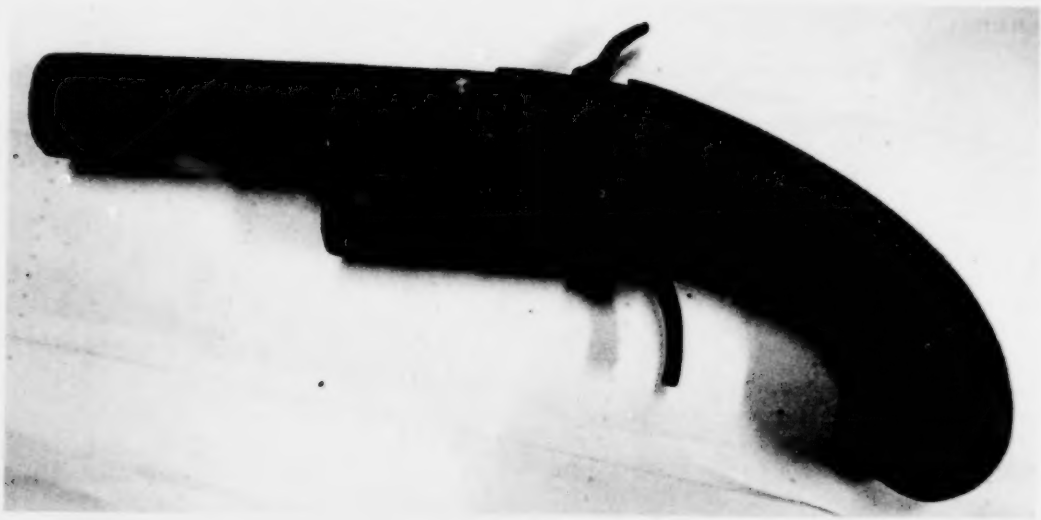
Annex VI

Handguns available in the local market in Monrovia*

* The annex has not been reproduced in the present document because it is strictly confidential.

Annex VII

Examples of artisanal pistols



Annex VIII

Attempted purchase of pistols from Emergency Response Unit officers*

* The annex has not been reproduced in the present document because it is strictly confidential.

Annex IX

Further information on payments to mercenaries

1. The network and the payments to mercenaries were exposed in May 2015 during efforts to expand the payment operation from Grand Gedeh County to River Gee and Maryland counties, based on the recognition that the latter two counties are the current hotspots for cross-border militant activity. In May, the national police received tips that well-known former Liberian generals were moving throughout River Gee County, holding meetings with other former fighters and, in some cases, paying them small sums. Based on those suspicions, the national police arrested Paye Suah in mid-May. He was subsequently released in unclear circumstances. On 16 May, the national police arrested Augustine Vleyee ("Bush Dog"), Ezekial Solo ("General Power") and Dennis Slayah ("Ble Goude"),[a] with whom the national police were much more careful given what had happened days before with the escape of Suah.

2. According to the national police officer in charge of the case, Bush Dog, General Power and Ble Goude stated that they were undercover National Security Agency operatives working with the full support and knowledge of the Agency and the highest levels of the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. A former Agency official also told the national police that the generals were part of a covert operation that he was leading with highest-level governmental approval in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

3. The national police asked headquarters whether that was the case and also inquired with National Security Agency officials. They received conflicting answers or answers that elided the question. None of the more senior officials ever directed the national police commander to release the men. Moreover, senior officials from neighbouring Grand Gedeh County contacted the commander to speak on behalf of the former generals and stated that they were conducting a covert operation. Owing to the conflicting and confusing nature of the information, and given the gravity of the situation, the commander transferred the three former generals from Fishtown, River Gee County, to Monrovia so that the situation could be better understood and resolved with all the relevant high-level officials involved. He informed the Panel that, once in Monrovia, he had been instructed to turn over the three to the Agency. They were subsequently released. The Panel is unaware of any investigation into the former Agency official or that he was ever brought in for questioning.

4. National Security Agency officials informed the Panel that at the highest level they were unaware of the payments to the mercenaries, did not sanction such activities and were very concerned about the former Agency official claiming to have covert connections. They characterized his freelance stabilization efforts as rogue entrepreneurial endeavours. They told the Panel that the situation had caused tension in the relationship between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire was sending a delegation to Monrovia to discuss the

[a] The Panel has reported on the mercenary activities of the individuals in the past (S/2012/448, paras. 52 and 67-77; S/2011/757, paras. 25-30, 36, 39-40, 47, 51 and 53-54; and S/2011/367, paras. 22, 23 and 37). Bush Dog, in particular, has a long history with the conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. In 2011, he was a leading commander of the Guiglo-Blolequin brigade fighting for Gbagbo. He was twice arrested by the Liberian authorities and released in unclear circumstances. He also previously told the Panel that he had fought in Mali as a mercenary.

situation and move ahead constructively. The Panel is unaware whether that happened.

5. The Panel interviewed the former National Security Agency official leading the operation in May and June 2015. He acknowledged that he was leading the group of former mercenary generals to discourage militant activity. He denied receiving any money from Côte d'Ivoire or any other source to finance the operation. Instead, he stated that all the activities were voluntary because of the need to ensure security in the region.

6. The Panel interviewed the three former generals on multiple occasions during their detention in Fishtown and after their release. The Panel is of the opinion that they truly believed they were working for the Government of Liberia. They stated that they were indeed former mercenary generals, but that they had been working for the "Government" since May 2013 along with a group of more than 15 former Liberian generals, as indicated in statements taken while in police custody (annex X.A contains a handwritten list of generals). Bush Dog, General Power and Ble Goude independently informed the Panel that since May 2013 the former National Security Agency official had been paying them every month. The payments had varied slightly over time and between the individuals, but averaged about $150 per month. The Panel contacted three other former generals on the list. Each confirmed the story and also stated that the former Agency official had also been paying them every month since May 2013 in roughly equal amounts. Moreover, the individuals told the Panel that the former Agency official had purchased telephones for them all (see annex X.B for images), purchased at least five motorbikes for the group (see annex X.C for receipts) and would occasionally cover miscellaneous expenses incurred during the operation.

7. The stated purpose of the mission was to contact the individuals currently involved in attacks and convince them not to conduct further attacks or pay them small amounts to discourage them from doing so. They travelled as far south as the Little Wlebo refugee camp in Maryland County. The generals said that they were not adequately supported or prepared for such an operation. According to their statements, they are Krahn from Grand Gedeh County and have no close ties to former combatants in River Gee County or Maryland County and could not speak the dialects. The only individual who had local ties was Paye Suah (see above), but the three generals removed him from the operation when it became clear that communities were afraid of him because he had committed well-known atrocities in River Gee County during his time as a rebel general. Suah was travelling back to Grand Gedeh County when he was arrested; this explains why he was arrested on his own, at a different time than the others.

8. Bush Dog, General Power and Ble Goude stated that they were operating only in Liberia and had not travelled to Côte d'Ivoire in years. However, they were arrested with a prepaid Ivorian MTN SIM card and a notebook full of numbers, many of which were Ivorian. Bush Dog had a bible containing a note about a residence in Abidjan dated 20 April 2015 (see annex X.D). When asked about the entry, he became flustered and was unable to explain. Ble Goude was arrested with an Ecobank ATM card (see annex X.E) and his passport, which included stamps indicating travel to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (see annex X.F). He was unable to explain the trips and denied ever visiting Ghana. The stamp for Ghana is particularly interesting because it appears to from 12 April 2015 — nearly the same

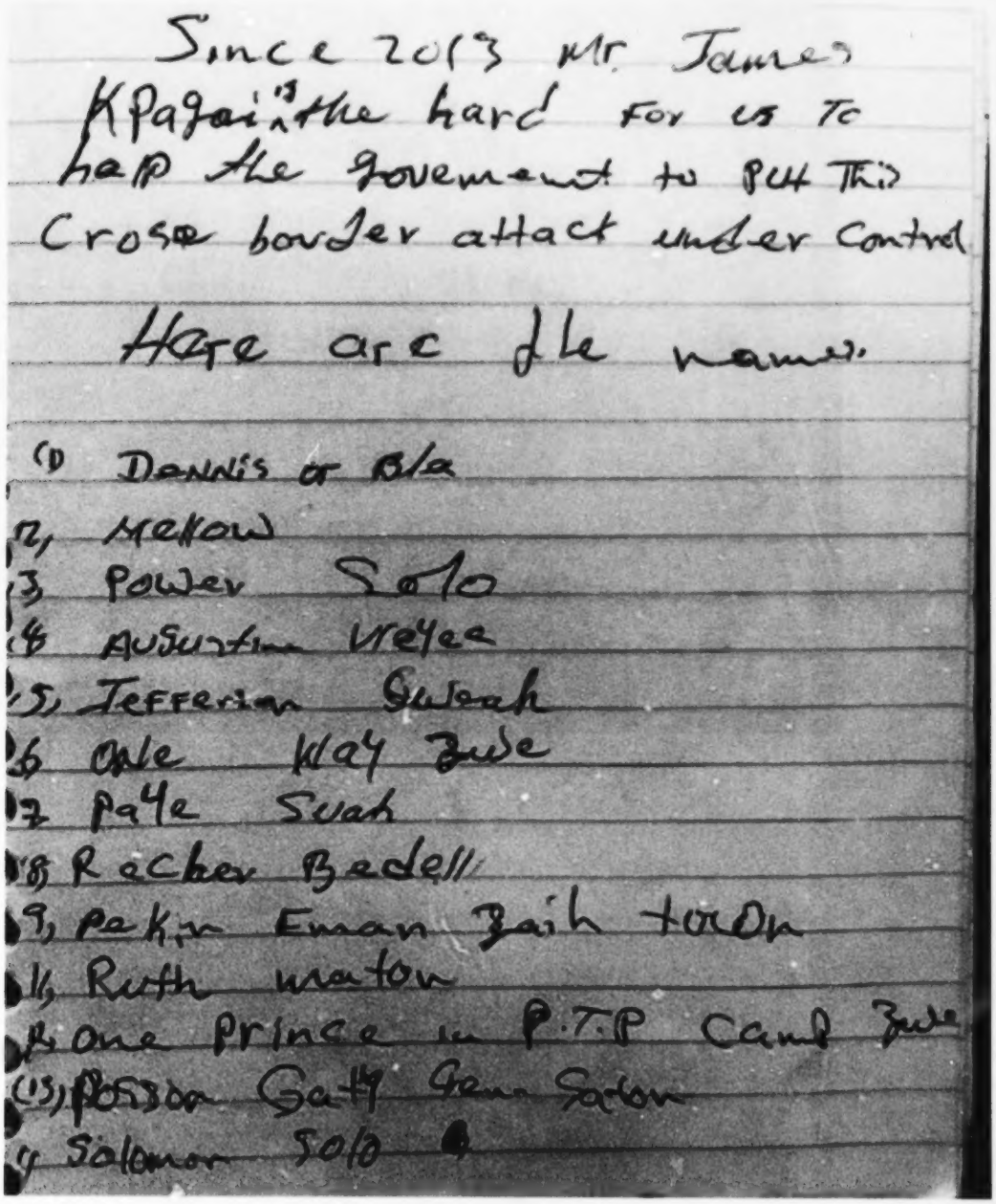
as the date in Bush Dog's bible. Moreover, it is an exit stamp from the Loguatuo border crossing from Liberia into Côte d'Ivoire. There are no entry or exit stamps from Ghana, suggesting that Ble Goude may have travelled only as far as Côte d'Ivoire. The Panel inquired with the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization about the Loguatuo border stamp and was informed that it was a forgery and that there was an individual in the Buduburam refugee camp in Ghana who was known to forge documents like that to enter and exit Liberia. Two former militant sources of the Panel stated that the Loguatuo border crossing was a preferred crossing for such individuals.

9. The Panel obtained access to the individuals' telephones. They contained many numbers in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. There were also photographs and videos of the group along the Cavalla River. In a telling text message exchange, General Power is "suspended" by the former National Security Agency official and made to surrender his motorbike in an illustration of the military command structure that characterizes the group. A later text message shows his reinstatement (see annex X.G).

10. According to the individuals, before the National Security Agency released them, a senior official apologized for their arrest and praised their efforts to discourage cross-border attacks. All the officials with whom the Panel spoke, however, including those from the Agency, the national police and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, stated that they were unaware of the activities of the three men and had no idea that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire had continued to pay mercenaries. Given that the payments never stopped, the way in which the case was handled in Monrovia and the confidence of the former Agency official, the Panel suspects that some individuals in the Government of Liberia may have been involved in or had knowledge of the matter.

Annex IX.A

Handwritten list of mercenary generals



Since 2013 Mr. James
KPagai the hard for us to
help the goverment to put this
Cross border attact under control

Here are the names.

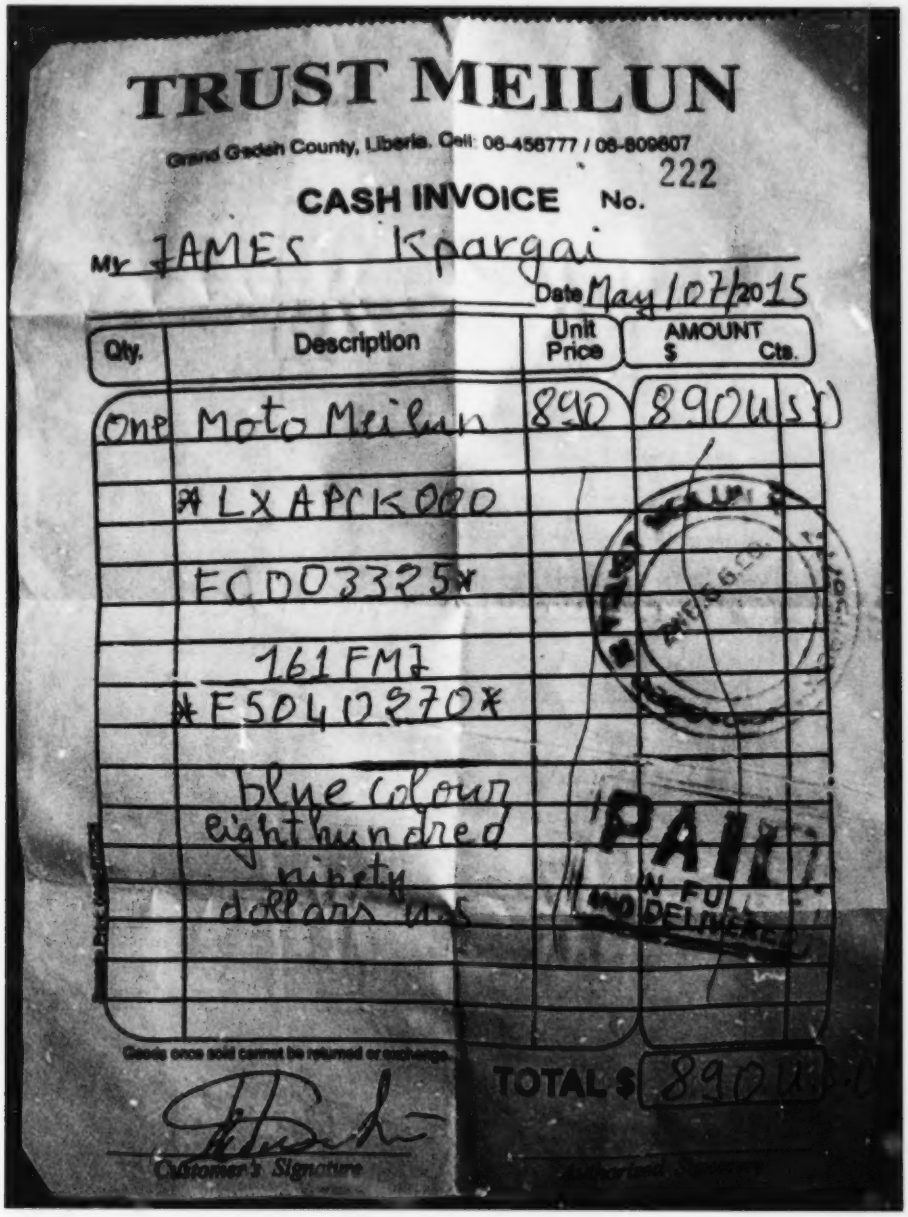
(1) Dennis of B/a
(2) Mekow
(3) Power Solo
(4) Augustine Vreyea
(5) Jefferson Gweah
(6) Cole Way Zue
(7) Paye Swah
(8) Rocher Bedell
(9) Pakar Eman Zaih tordn
(10) Ruth mator
(11) one Prince in P.T.P Camp Zue
(12) Poson Gatty Gene Sador
(13) Solomon Solo

Annex IX.B

Telephones used by former mercenary generals

Annex IX.C

Receipts for motorbike purchases found on detained individuals



TRUST MEILUN

Grand Gedeh County, Liberia. Cell: 08-456777 / 08-809607

CASH INVOICE No. 222

Mr JAMES Kpargai

Date May 10th 2015

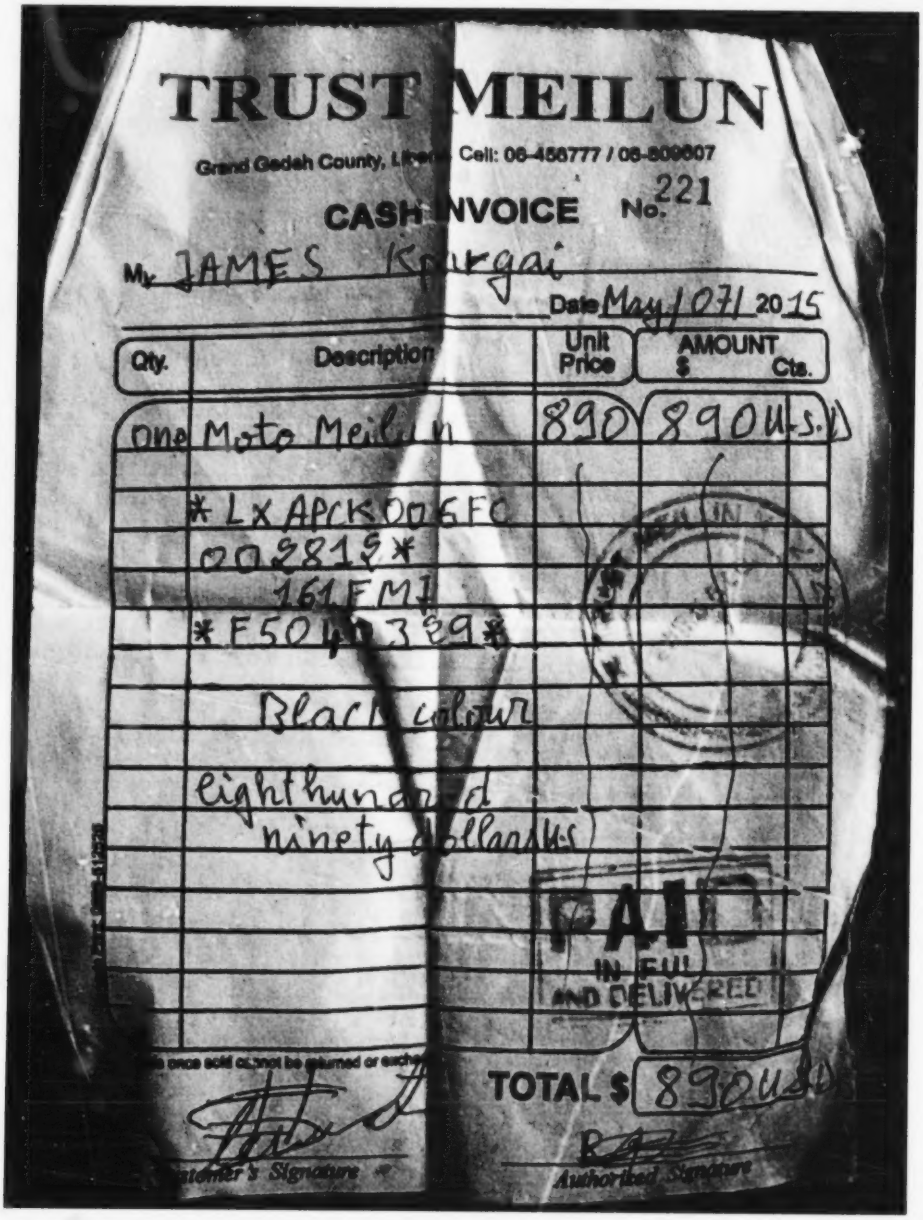
Qty.	Description	Unit Price	AMOUNT $ Cts.
One	Moto Meilun	890	890 US
	#LXAPC1K000		
	FCD03325*		
	161FMJ		
	F5041270		
	blue colour eight hundred ninety dollars US		

PAID IN FU AND DELIVERED

Goods once sold cannot be returned or exchange.

TOTAL $ 890.00

Customer's Signature



TRUST MEILUN

Grand Gedeh County, Liberia Cell: 06-456777 / 06-509607

CASH INVOICE No. 221

Mr. JAMES Kpargai

Date May 07 2015

Qty.	Description	Unit Price	AMOUNT $ Cts.
One	Moto Meilun	890	890 U.S.D
	*LXAPCK00GFC		
	002815*		
	161FMJ		
	F50403389		
	Black colour		
	eighthundred ninety dollars U.S		

PAID IN FULL AND DELIVERED

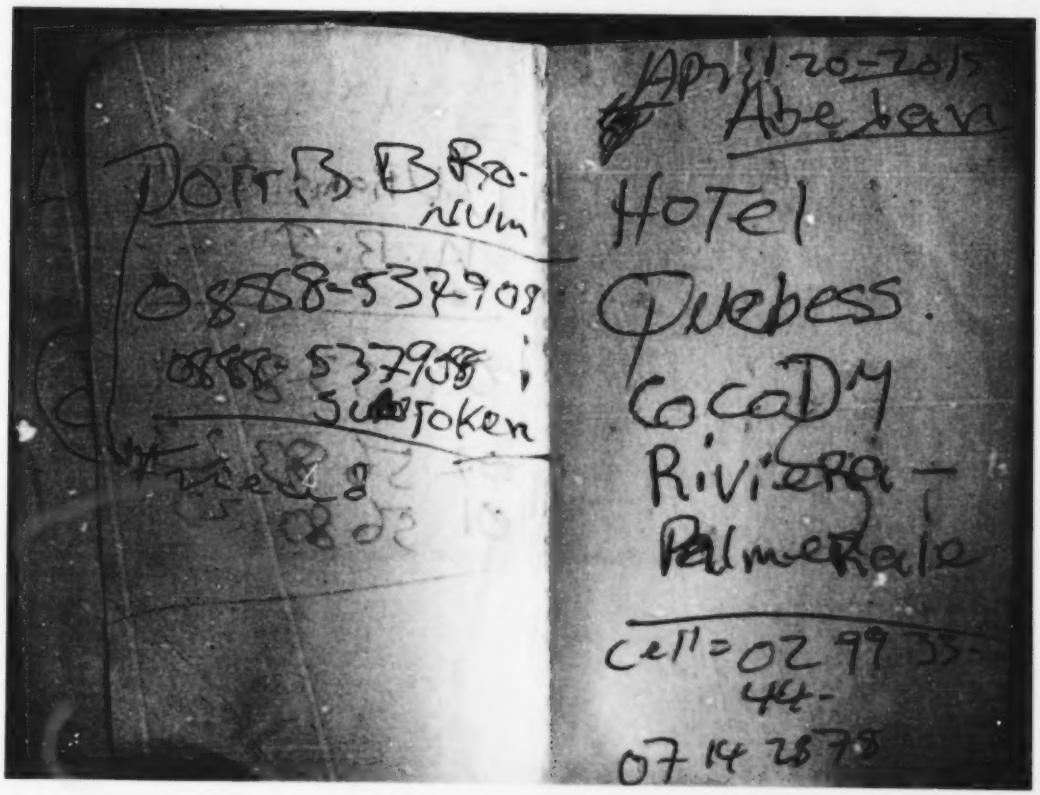
TOTAL $ 890USD

Customer's Signature

Authorized Signature

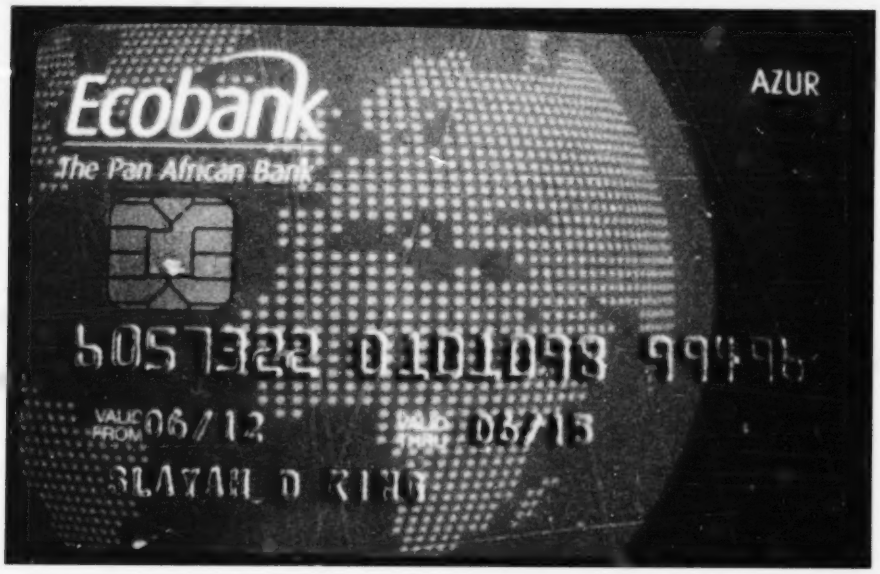
Annex IX.D

Bush Dog's bible with April 2015 date and Abidjan address



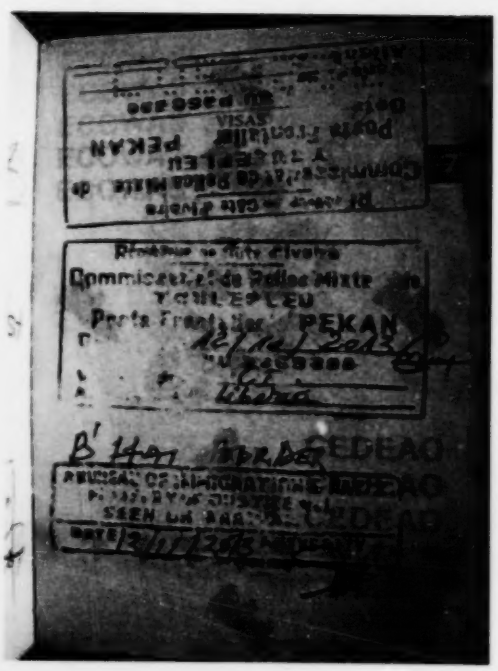
Annex IX.E

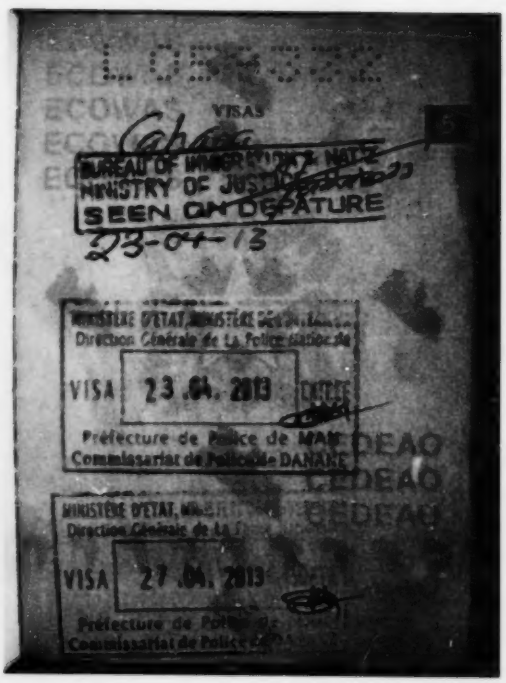
Ecobank card belonging to Dennis Slayah ("Ble Goude")

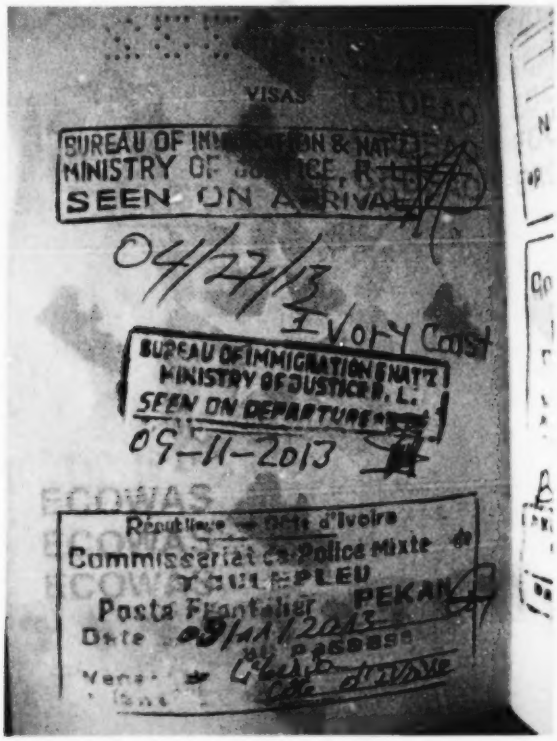


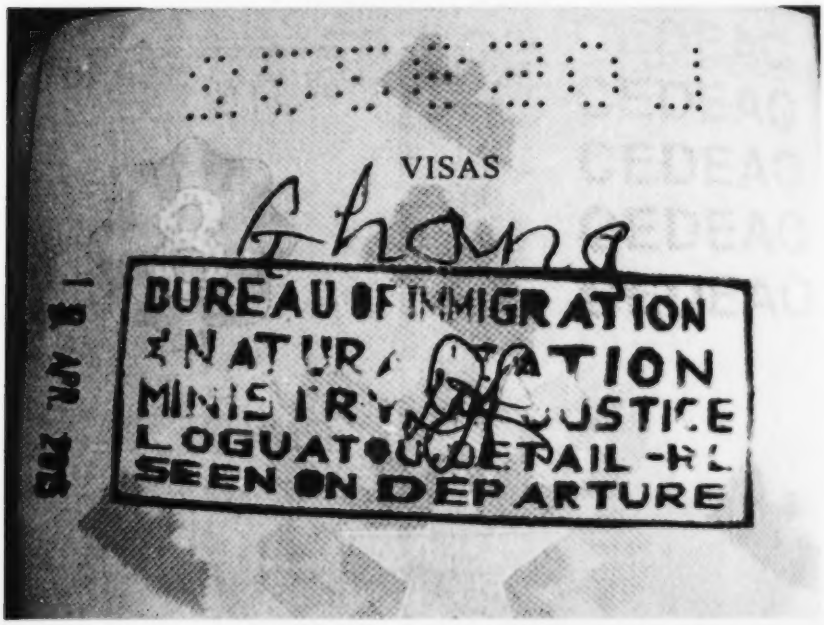
Annex IX.F

Dennis Slayah's passport and stamped pages



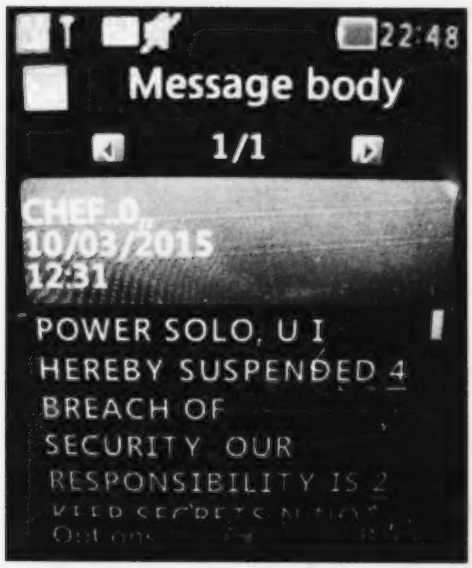


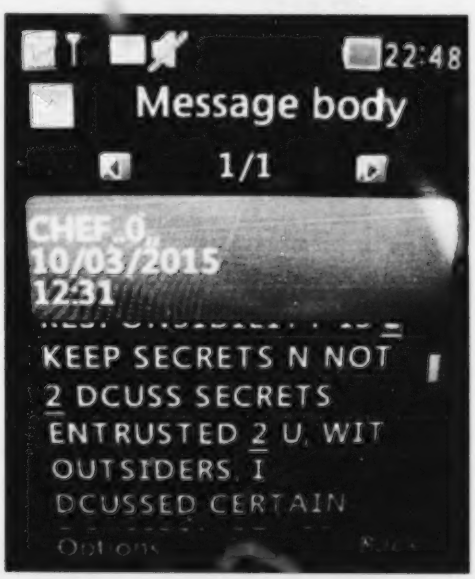

VISAS
SEEN ON ARRIVAL
04/27/13
Ivory Coast
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION & NATZ
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE R. L.
SEEN ON DEPARTURE
09-11-2013
Commissariat de Police Mixte
PEKAN
Date 09/11/2013

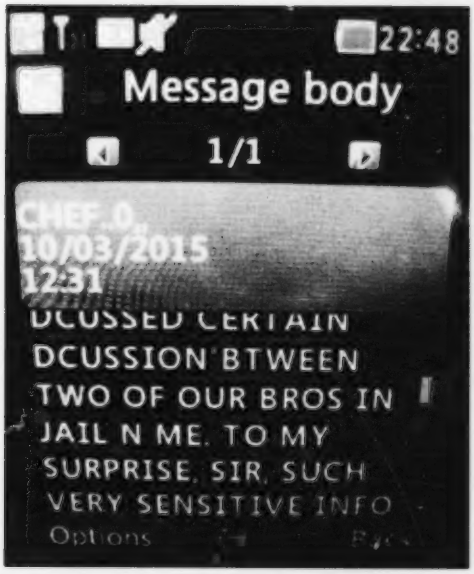

VISAS
Ghana
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
SEEN ON DEPARTURE

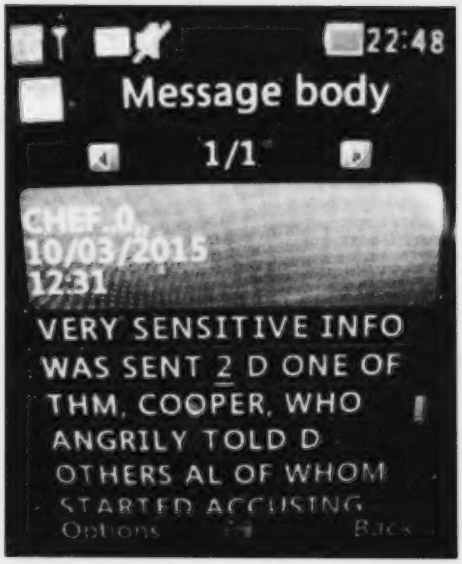
Annex IX.G

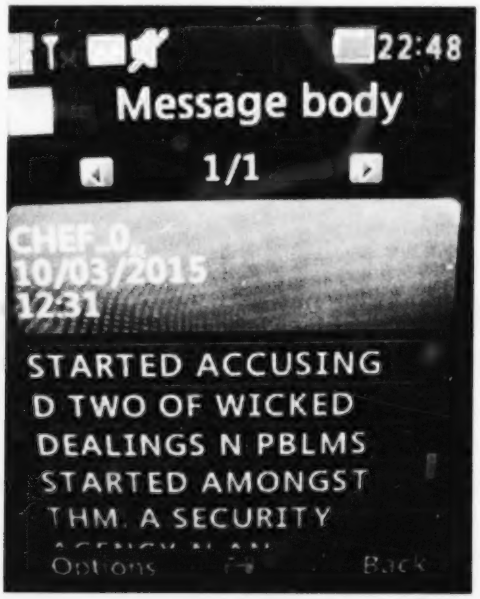
Text messages sent by the former National Security Agency official to General Power, showing command and control responsibilities, military-style organization and links between former Liberian mercenary generals

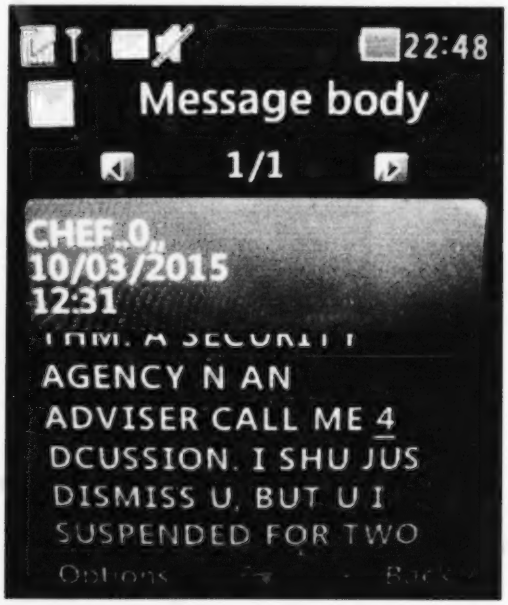


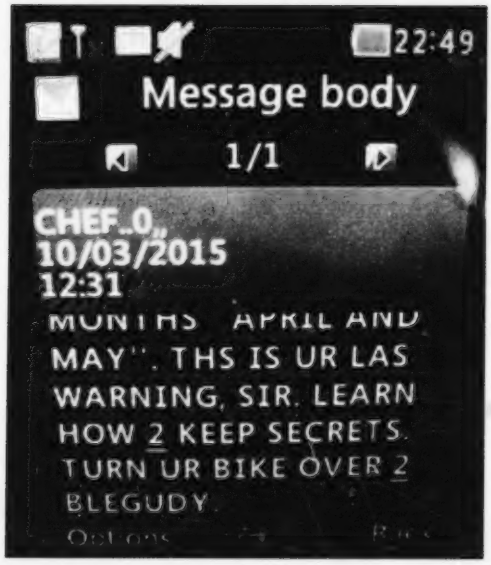







22:48
Message body
1/1
CHEF_O_
10/03/2015
12:31
STARTED ACCUSING
D TWO OF WICKED
DEALINGS N PBLMS
STARTED AMONGST
THM. A SECURITY
Options
Back


22:48
Message body
1/1
CHEF_O_
10/03/2015
12:31
AGENCY N AN
ADVISER CALL ME 4
DCUSSION. I SHU JUS
DISMISS U, BUT U I
SUSPENDED FOR TWO


22:49
Message body
1/1
CHEF_O_
10/03/2015
12:31
MAY''. THS IS UR LAS
WARNING, SIR. LEARN
HOW 2 KEEP SECRETS.
TURN UR BIKE OVER 2
BLEGUDY.

Annex X

Photograph of Tiah Moduan Alexan, also known as "Terminator" (rear), and Todia Bliase, also known as "Blessing"